

PEOPLE & THINGS By ATTICUS

IF in the region of Westminster you see some smiling faces the chances are that they belong to the Tory politicians. Rightly or wrongly they regard the by-election result in South-East Leicester as the turn of the tide.

The Conservatives, it appears, have been tuning up their propaganda. I was allowed to see some documentary films which will be shown across the country. The best is a documentary on the life of Mr. Harold Macmillan. We see him as a handsome Guards officer in the first world war, then through his various posts in war and peace until to his own astonishment he found himself Minister of Housing; and finally, of course, as Prime Minister.

There is one dangerous moment in the film but it is skilfully handled. The narrator tells us that the Prime Minister's work is finished for the week and he is now returning to his home in the country for a respite. Then there comes on the screen a large and attractive country house, a home for a man of taste and wealth, at which point the narrator says: "On the wall of his study there is a framed picture of the Scottish house in which his crofter grandfather lived."

There, in brief, is the pride and the justification of a system which permits a family to rise from the crofter's cottage to the country house and No. 10, Downing Street, all in three generations.

Still Going Strong

LAST Sunday I ventured the mild comment that the perfect portrait of Sir Winston Churchill would be in an ordinary suit of clothes rather than in uniform or robes. This has brought an interesting letter from Mrs. Marita Ross, who tells me that Frank Salisbury has painted the great man no fewer than nine times, thrice in conventional dress, such as he would have worn in the House of Commons while making one of his famous wartime speeches.

But whether in siren suit, the Robes of the Garter or just striped trousers and black coat, he is the greatest man of our age and we all extend congratulations to him on celebrating his eighty-third birthday yesterday. In his glorious life he has burned the candle at both ends and the middle, but what a light it still gives in this darkling world!

Miss Peenemünde

A DISTANT relation of Lord Macaulay, a granddaughter of Lord Elgin and a second cousin of Rose Macaulay, Constance Babington Smith, whose "Evidence in Camera" is being serialised in THE SUNDAY TIMES, was learning to make hats with the Royal milliner, Aage Thaarup, when she "fell completely in love with aeroplanes" on her first visit to Brooklands just before the war.

A person of rare singleness of mind, she even designed herself a hat shaped like a bomber which she wore with considerable effect at a Royal Aeronautical Society garden party. But now that she has finished her book, and told how she first spotted the V1 at Peenemünde, she admits that she is no longer really interested in aircraft.

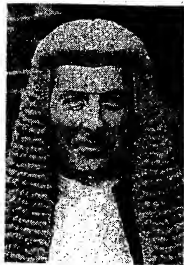
For five years after the war, Miss Babington Smith worked as a journalist in America, and did research for the Ameri-

can edition of Sir Winston Churchill's memoirs.

Most of her book was written in Cambridge, where she went to keep house for the Master of Corpus on her return from America.

Doctor in the Court

SIR HARRY HYLTON-FOSTER, M.P., who as Solicitor-General is conducting the case for the Crown in the Brighton corruption charges, would have made a particularly



Sir Harry Hylton-Foster, Q.C.

successful family doctor if his inclination had run that way instead of the law. He has wide kindly eyes with only a suggestion of irony when he smiles. Rich widows would have found him a charming listener to their complaints.

When he intervenes in a House of Commons debate he does so almost with deference and gives the impression that it is only to clarify the bemused arguments of the honorable gentleman opposite. As for the alleged opening of a Brighton night club at the very hour that all rival clubs were obliged to close, Sir Harry seems to agree that the idea was novel and comprehensible, but perhaps not quite according to the law. It is only when a case is concluded that the court realises how ruthlessly he has scored on points.

No Gnashing Now

SO the Nash Terraces are to be saved. I have a special reason for rejoicing because between my home in St. John's Wood and THE SUNDAY TIMES offices in Gray's Inn Road I drive through Regent's Park and bathe my senses in the splendid houses designed by Nash or his contemporary, Decimus Burton.

It might be argued that the value of a house is not in its exterior but in its service as a dwelling-place, but the pedestrian, the cyclist or the motorist cannot see or enjoy the interior of these stately buildings. Our ancestors, wise in their generation, left us the legacy of spacious parks and beautiful terraces. I congratulate those patient people who have campaigned for so long against the coarse hand of the house-breaker. I do not care if the authorities put the Department of Inland Revenue in the Regency houses if they only leave us the charm of the stately façades.

University Freedom

I AM glad to hear that Oxford has already collected well over £500,000 towards the target figure of £1,750,000 for their Historic Buildings Appeal.

Should Oxford feel daunted by the immensity of the sum still to be collected, it should take comfort from the example of Harvard University. Its

president, Dr. Pusey, and its dean, Dr. McGeorge Bundy, have been travelling across the United States on a fund-raising campaign, stopping wherever there are major "cells" of Harvard alumni. Their "circus" includes a speech and a film showing Harvard's story since its inception. Their target is no less than £27 million. In the first six weeks they have already collected £8 million, of which £5 million will go to higher staff salaries.

My colleague Henry Brandon tells me that the night after this travelling circus performed in Washington, he went to dinner with a Harvard graduate. His host's wife tried to find out, with some trepidation, how much money he had pledged for his alma mater. An interesting argument developed in which the graduate said one of the most important things he could do in life was to help contribute to the independence of Harvard from Government support. If Harvard had not been a completely independent institution, he argued, it could not have resisted all the pressures during the McCarthy period.

Horse Sense

ADMITTEDLY the subject of cavalry officers is not a burning one in these modern mechanical days, but I have often wondered why they have always been traditionally regarded as being less intelligent than those who marched to war. The other day I picked up a book in my library published some years ago and read this sentence: "The cavalry officer was so stupid that even his fellow-officers noticed it."

This reminded me of an incident some years ago when "Billy" Hughes, the vigorous, strident and rather deaf Prime Minister of Australia, dined at my house with three or four good companions. As the conversation got going one of us asked Mr. Hughes about a certain prominent figure with whom he had political dealings. "He had a brain like a cavalry officer," rasped the little man.

At this one of my guests reared his head and said: "I must tell you, sir, that I am a cavalry officer." Mr. Hughes put on his glasses, looked at him, took off his glasses and continued: "Well, as I was saying, he had a brain like a cavalry officer."

Happy Kalamazoo

I WAS charmed to receive my copy of the "Kalamazoo Gazette." It is a special British edition, written there, printed here, in honour of the exhibition, now touring our major towns, depicting life in this typical American city.

A great deal of thought has gone into making the whole issue attractive to a British audience, from the front page lead story down to the recipe for Kalamazoo Buckwheats.

The article that fascinated me most analysed the budget of a typical Kalamazoo couple, both teachers, whose joint income is £3,750. Out of this, they pay £215 income tax—here, they would pay nearly double—and with the remainder have managed to acquire a 1957 Chevrolet, a washing machine, a clothes-drier, a refrigerator, a TV set, and a £6,000 house—"all paid for in cold hard cash."

"Ah yes," say the sceptics, "but things like food are so much more expensive over there." I wonder. A quick glance through the "Gazette's"

advertisements tells me that you can buy two pounds of grapes there for 2s. 6d., a pound of sirloin steak for 4s. 11d., and a pound of butter for 3s. 6d.

Disappointment

ONLY a very brave man can put on a straight play in New York, according to Donald Houston, who has just come back after the closing, following a dismal four-week run, of Dylan Thomas's "Under Milk Wood."

Production costs in America are vast, and the stagehands earn as much as most of the actors. Prices of seats are correspondingly high, so that the New York theatregoer studies a play's notices very carefully.

Although "Under Milk Wood" had an ecstatic first night, its notices were depressing. Most of the critics, Houston says, told their readers: "This is a play for the fringe; I don't think you would appreciate it." Advance bookings dropped, despite the cult of Dylan Thomas among American literati.

Houston is bitterly disappointed: as the Onlooker he has lived with the play for the last fifteen months, through its rapturous reception at Edinburgh and the long London run. He says gloomily that he will have difficulty in developing such an affection for another play.

Top Yachtsman

A FRAIL-LOOKING, diffident writer and publisher is likely to be named Yachtsman of the Year at the forthcoming National Boat Show at Olympia.

He is Adlard Coles of Bursledon near Southampton, who, although he has written extremely readable books about the creeks and harbours of the Solent and Channel, seldom spends long in any of them if there is a chance of putting out into deep water.

This year, though in his fifties, he commissioned a brand-new yacht, Cohoe III, and with her won the Channel Race, the La Rochelle to Benodet (Bay of Biscay) Race, the Fastnet Race and the Royal Ocean Racing Club points championship in his own class.

An earlier Cohoe belonging to Coles was the smallest boat in her ocean-racing class and had to be fitted with a wooden "false nose" to enable her to compete in the famous race from the United States to Bermuda, the minimum length being 35 feet. This Cohoe went on to win the transatlantic race back to Plymouth, logging an average of more than seven knots on three days.

Coles was originally a dinghy helmsman and a fine oarsman. I salute him in advance of his expected honour.

People and Words

Modern pictures are designed to be written about or spoken about—but not to be looked at.

—MR. JAMES FITTON, R.A.

Nowadays the metaphor of fertility is not the rabbit but the official form. I should like to see myxomatosis spread through the whole world of form-filling.

—MR. HALFORD REDDISH.

Television will never be of any service to real drama in Britain.

—SIR DONALD WOLFE.

I once heard an actuary described as a man who is dead on time.

—THE PRIME MINISTER.

I do a fair bit of baby-sitting nowadays.

—JOHN ATTIE.